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ABSTRACT

The Urban Institute organized a workshop to receive the reactions of experts to a model for helping underclass youth, the Mentor, Peer Group, and Incentive (MPI) Model. This model uses the three components of mentors, peer groups, and incentives to improve the life chances of adolescent males in socially distressed neighborhoods. Workshop participants included practitioners, program developers, administrators, researchers, and policymakers. Workshop discussions were initiated by a series of presentations that ranged from theoretical issues about self-esteem to practical questions of administration. The following seven conference papers are highlighted: (1) "The Mentor, Peer Group, and Incentive Model" (Ronald B. Mincy and Susan J. Wiener); (2) "Adolescent African American Male Self-Esteem: Suggestions for Mentoring Program Content" (Margaret Beale Spencer); (3) "The Case for Community-Based Programs that Inform and Motivate Black Male Youth" (Ronald F. Ferguson); (4) "A Cross-Cultural Perspective on Mentoring Minority Youth" (John Wilson); (5) "Linking Mentoring and Schooling: A Reform Agenda" (Norris Haynes); (6) "Minority Male Mentoring in the 1990s: A Practitioner's Experience" (Andre Watson); and (7) "Mentors for High-Risk Minority Children: Toward Bicultural Competence" (Elaine A. Blechman). The workshop was a successful exchange of ideas about how community-based mentoring programs can help prepare young minority boys to become responsible men and parents. (SLD)

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Guiding Boys through the Transition to Adulthood:

ED 361 447

The Role and Potential of Mentoring

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Guiding Boys through the Transition to Adulthood:

The Role and Potential of Mentoring

THE URBAN INSTITUTE RESEARCH AGENDA ON YOUNG BLACK MALES

The cumulative results of a six-year policy research program have led the Urban Institute Underclass Research Project to focus on five subpopulations: (1) teen-age parents; (2) high school dropouts; (3) women heading welfare-dependent families; (4) men detached from the labor force; and (5) young black men involved in violent criminal or drug-related activities. The first four subpopulations have been long-standing targets of public and private interventions. Thus, policymakers can continually draw on a large body of knowledge and experience to develop or redesign interventions to help them.

By contrast, there is little knowledge about preventative programs targeting black boys who experience a range of problems from school failure and unemployment to drug addiction, crime, and murder. In the face of this void, the major public policies targeting young black men are new prisons and mandatory sentencing. These have resulted in rising rates of incarceration, but no improvement in the socioeconomic status of black men.

We developed an agenda to research and conceptualize programs and strategies that address these problems through long-term solutions. First, Mincy and Wiener created a program model, which is described in the research paper "A Mentor, Peer Group, and Incentive Model for Helping Underclass Youth." **(See Mincy and Wiener highlight.)** The model uses three components: mentors, peer groups, and incentives (MPI), to improve the life chances of adolescent males in socially distressed neighborhoods.

For our purposes, a mentor is an adult who uses some functional activity (or activities) to establish a caring and trusting relationship with one or more youth and uses that relationship to ease transitions to adulthood. For example, some programs use activities to cement the mentor-protege relationship. From sports activities, for example, conversations about goals, obstacles, and strategies for attaining goals will ensue, and mentors guide proteges as they take actions consistent with their goals.

Mentors use the relationship to assist youth with a range of challenges. Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America, for example, focus on a wide range of challenges, while Campus Partners in Learning uses college students as mentors, who are told to limit their intervention to academic matters.

Not all mentoring programs use the same model. The one-to-one model (Big Brothers/Big Sisters) uses mainly volunteers. The peer group/mentoring model uses a few paid and unpaid staff to work with a larger number of youth. The critical feature of this model is that youth form relationships with several adults. Simba programs, rites of passage programs based on African heritage, use this model.

There are also youth development programs targeting black male youth that do not use mentors, although some of these programs are called mentoring programs. This group of non-mentoring

programs could be defined by function, staffing, or facilities. For example, some programs provide curricula to help youth avoid drug use, violence, teen fatherhood, or dropping out of high school, but these programs do not provide opportunities for long-term relationships between program staff and youth. Thus, mentoring programs are just one of many services used to promote healthy development among young black males.

Next, The Urban Institute organized a workshop to receive experts' reactions to the ideas advanced by the MPI model. The purpose of the workshop was to start an exchange of ideas about using community-based mentoring programs to help prepare 8- to 15-year-old minority boys to become responsible men and fathers. We convened experts from many fields that focus on services and programs for youth. Workshop participants included practitioners, program developers, foundation administrators, academic and other researchers, and policymakers from federal government agencies serving youth. They integrated theories of child and adolescent development with practical experience from programs targeting at-risk minority male youth. The workshop focused on: (1) roles that mentors can play to help adolescent boys make a successful transition to adulthood; and (2) realities and requirements of community-based programs that serve minority youth.

The goal of this publication is to provide insight into the policy debate of how best to serve the needs of black adolescent boys by exploring the issues and discussions of the workshop partici-

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pants. The discussions were initiated by a series of presentations that ranged from theoretical issues about self-esteem to practical questions of how to administer programs. In turn, the workshop yielded four main themes, discussed in this publication: self-esteem and childhood transition; community-based programs; education and the school system; and practical questions about mentoring.

In addition to the main narrative, this publication includes highlighted summaries of the workshop presentations. Four of the highlights are based on completed papers. Two of the papers are final research products (Mincy and Wiener; and Ferguson) and three are conference papers which contain informed recommendations based on practical experience. (To obtain a copy of the complete papers, see research paper order form on page 16).

The seven highlights summarize: (1) a description of the MPI model; (2) an examination of self-esteem and self-concept, and how these influence life choices; (3) a survey of programs that nurture young black males; (4) educational strategies of different minority groups; (5) the relationship between mentoring programs and schools; (6) practical answers to questions about program operations; and (7) a presentation on communication issues and competencies required of the mentor and child.

self-esteem and childhood transitions

Building positive self-esteem is a fundamental part of most programs that serve youth. A child's self-esteem is often edified or eroded by significant people in his life (friends, parents, or teachers).

"The Mentor, Peer Group, and Incentive Model"

Ronald B. Mincy and Susan J. Wiener

Improving the status of the most disadvantaged minorities in America means reversing three key trends: the growing number and concentration of female-headed families; the growing detachment of men from jobs and families; and the persistence of high rates of housing segregation among minorities in urban areas. To reverse these trends, employment and earnings of young minorities must increase and the number of unmarried minority teenage parents must decrease. These two changes will improve the ratio of earners to dependents in minority families, enabling more of these families to leave the neighborhoods where social problems incubate.

The Mentor, Peer Group, and Incentive Model was designed to help counteract the trends that lead to growth of the underclass. It targets 8- to 15-year-old boys who live in underclass areas. As a program of progressive behavioral change, it aims to increase their academic performance and reduce their probability of experiencing premature fatherhood. Within this model, mentors serve participants as intimate older friends, life skills teachers, academic advocates, and program administrators. Mentors also supervise and administer the peer group and incentive components.

Mentors use peer groups to provide academic and life skills training and to reinforce changes in attitudes about academic achievement and responsible sexual behavior. Mentors also use monetary incentives to encourage participants to continue in the program and to set and achieve short- and long-term goals. These rewards supplement a larger, lump sum award for post-secondary education to participants who successfully complete the program.

Although a child may have high self-esteem overall, he may feel inadequate in one particular facet of his life. He may not feel confident in his ability to perform well academically, even though he is very confident about himself as a person.

Self-esteem is vulnerable during times of transition (**see Spencer highlight**). The transition of adolescence involves challenges in all facets of development: physical, social, cognitive, emotional, and moral. Margaret Spencer's study, based on research she is conducting at Emory University, finds that African American males' academic self-esteem declines over time, particularly as they enter adolescence.

Thus, a key role of the mentor or other youth service provider is to raise a youth's self-esteem in a particular area. In some cases, such as MPI, the mentors will cultivate self-esteem in academic achievement or cultural literacy. The mentor would encourage the youth in his academic pursuits, perhaps by praising his progress rather than focusing on his failures. Other programs, such as manhood training, aim to promote a child's cultural self-esteem. These programs are structured around African languages and cultural processes to enhance a boy's sense of self and understanding of his cultural history and values.

building healthy lives

Ron Ferguson asserts that "self-esteem is not the right thing to focus on to serve young black males." Dr. Ferguson, a professor at the JFK School of Government, presented findings from his research and survey of programs that serve minority youth (**see Ferguson highlight**). He

"Adolescent African American Male Self-Esteem: Suggestions For Mentoring Program Content"

Margaret Beale Spencer

Studies have found that the academic and intellectual self-esteem of African American boys declines with age, in contrast to that of African American girls. At what point does this happen, and what can we learn from it that would make mentoring programs for black youths more effective?

The author studied 384 children who attended pre-school or elementary school in a large, southern city. She studied a younger (3- and 5-year-olds) and an older (7- and 9-year-olds) transition group. A total of 150 of these children were examined again three years later as they entered primary school and early adolescence.

Findings Relevant to the Design of Mentoring Programs

The study showed that during the transition from pre-school and kindergarten into primary school, both males and females perceive themselves as having a "lot of ability." This suggests that high expectations for self as a learner are in place quite early. However, perceptions of competence in school erode the longer African American males remain in the traditional American school.

Second, African American boys view ability in the generic rather than the academic-specific sense, including areas such as athletic ability, church activities, "street savvy," or the ability to make friends easily. When "ability" is perceived as "school or academic-specific," boys' "self-perception as a learner" declines. This low perception of "student self" was even more apparent for the group of males entering adolescence. In contrast, no similar pattern was evident for African American females of the same age group.

Third, girls making the transition into primary school have a significantly greater perception of self as "healthy" than do boys during the same transition. It is important to ask whether this early pattern of health orientation or awareness has implications for the consistent differences observed in mortality and morbidity rates between African American males and females across the life course.

Recommendations

Findings suggest that interventions should start early and continue in developmentally specific and appropriate ways. Specifically, because boys entering the primary grades continue to see their general ability as generic and non-school linked, mentoring programs need to focus on increasing the school-based self-esteem of young African American males. Programs that do so can begin to address the problem of high grade retention and school drop-out rates among this group.

observed that for a program to effectively place youth on a healthy life trajectory, it must include several steps. First, a program must engage the youth. Then, a program should expand the youth's options, while providing him with strategies to pursue these options. Finally, the program activities should provide a forum to develop and practice the skills needed to follow the strategies.

the role of community-based programs

Following Dr. Ferguson's review of programs, participants discussed ways in which services could be provided to a larger number of black male youth. William Riley, Acting Director, Division of Policy and Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, asked "Why can't we expand Big Brothers?" Several participants had thoughts about why expanding a well-respected and successful national model such as Big Brothers may not be the best way to reach young black males. Jim Gibson, of the Rockefeller Foundation, indicated that it is an issue of changing demographics. He explained that communities that need these programs have experienced disintegrating support systems. Part of the role of programs is to reconstruct the community's infrastructure.

Maria Casey, from the Urban Strategies Council in Oakland, cited a need for multiple types of programs. She believes some youth can be served by Big Brothers and Boys Clubs, while others need more comprehensive help. For example, some youth may require programs that involve parents who would not have the skills to support the services provided by a Big Brothers organization.

diversity: programs of workshop participants

Participants included practitioners who provided diverse and practical perspectives based on their experience with youth development programs in several communities. Representatives' experience included community-wide involvement, long-term mentoring, manhood training, and university-based programs. For example, the Urban Strategies Council, whose programs serve the entire city of Oakland, recently developed a Mentoring Center to provide assistance to programs in the community. Other programs represented at the workshop were Project RAISE, which provides one-on-one mentors to inner-city public school students to decrease drop-out rates and improve their life chances; East End Neighborhood House, a residential manhood training program in Cleveland; and Career Beginnings, which uses college students to help prepare high school students for college matriculation.

mentoring and education

One major obstacle to economic opportunities for black men is insufficient educational attainment. To secure a job in today's labor market workers need at least a high school diploma and often some college. Barriers to education begin early for black males. Disciplinary policies in the later elementary and middle school years often pose additional barriers. Being held back two or more grades is more common among minority males than females or white males and is a precursor to dropping out.

John Wilson gave a presentation at the mentoring workshop discussing student perceptions and offered a theory on barriers to academic success for black males (**see Wilson highlight**). Certain minorities, including African Americans, possess cultural models and educational strategies that are not always conducive to learning in the traditional American school system. They develop what Wilson calls oppositional social identities, an identity directly opposed to mainstream social characteristics, as a reaction to negative treatment from the mainstream culture. One way to help minority students avoid the feeling that they must develop oppositional social identities is to show them that there are role models that used education to achieve status.

In response to the barriers that minority students face in the current school system, several researchers have developed school reform models. For example, Dr. James Comer, a psychiatrist at Yale University, designed a program to address comprehensive child development. Schools incorporating the Comer process develop supportive environments that consider the many influences in a child's world. The schools promote the social and psychological needs of the children, which has resulted in higher academic achievements. The model depends heavily on parental involvement, cooperation by all levels of school staff, and interaction between parents, teachers, and other service providers such as mental health professionals. The Comer process was first implemented in elementary schools in New Haven and has been adopted by over 100 schools.

"The Case for Community-Based Programs that Inform and Motivate Black Male Youth"

by Ronald F. Ferguson

What can and should the ideal neighborhood-based intervention program for 10- to 15-year-old black males do to change the life chances of boys in this age range? The roles that children choose are those they expect may yield the greatest satisfaction. But their field of choice is limited to the roles about which they are aware and for which they feel qualified.The ideal youth program expands the number of roles that young males know of and feel qualified to pursue, and equips participants with the ability to pursue them.

Techniques that Build Healthy Lives

The author studied effective techniques used in more than 20 neighborhood-based programs in Boston, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Hartford, and Washington, D.C. All programs served inner-city black male youth and explicitly aimed to improve their self-esteem. Most program participants at the time of the interviews were from low-income single-parent households. Effective youth programs employ four key techniques to meet their common goal of promoting success among African American male children: (1) providing caring and nurturing relationships; (2) teaching children strategies; (3) enhancing their skills; and (4) helping them to recognize and experience reward structures that foster healthy choices.

Recommendations

Programs could improve more quickly if they received more assistance with staff training and curriculum development. Funders could provide a very useful service by sponsoring and widely disseminating annotated bibliographies of published curricula and, better yet, sponsoring production of additional curriculum materials. The program staff interviewed for this study also endorsed "networking conferences" where people could trade ideas and where workshops could provide staff training.

"A Cross-Cultural Perspective on Mentoring Minority Youth"

by John Wilson

Cross-cultural studies show there are different kinds of minorities and that while the cultural models and educational strategies of some are conducive to success, those of others are not. Minorities can be classified into three distinct types: autonomous, immigrant, and involuntary minorities. Autonomous minorities, such as Jews and Mormons,possess a distinct ethnic, religious, linguistic, or cultural identity. Immigrant minorities, such as the Chinese and the Punjabi Indians, have moved to the United States more or less voluntarily in search of more economic well-being, opportunities, and/or political freedom. Once language barriers are overcome, these minority types rarely exhibit difficulties in the mainstream education system.

The group that mentoring programs should target make up the final type of minority—involuntary or caste-like minorities. These include African Americans, Puerto Ricans, native Hawaiians, and Native Americans. Originally brought into the United States involuntarily through slavery, conquest, or colonization, these minorities generally occupy menial positions and lack true assimilation into mainstream American society. Involuntary minorities experience more difficulties with social adjustment and academic achievement, because they adopt "secondary" cultural differences in response to domination by another group.

Implications of Cultural Differences for Mentoring Programs

Adults who mentor involuntary minority youth should understand secondary cultural differences. Such understanding is especially important if mentors are not involuntary minorities, a likely scenario considering the lack of available mentors from involuntary minority groups.

Mentors must demonstrate and show that the rewards for hard work at school outweigh the costs. They must help to demystify the connection between schoolwork and the skills required in the workplace. Mentors can accomplish these goals by building into their program some immediate gratification such as a paid summer internship to show that learning pays dividends.

School reform is a complex, expensive, and highly politicized issue. Thus, we were skeptical about how long it would take for school reform to be implemented. We asked Dr. Norris Haynes, a colleague of Comer's at the Yale Child Study Center, if mentoring programs could substitute for school reform (**see Haynes highlight**). Dr. Haynes concluded that mentoring programs and schools are complements, not competitors, and should be better integrated.

Currently, several school reform models combine mentors and school reform to remove barriers to black male learning. Dr. Spencer Holland, director of the Center for Education of African American Males at Morgan State University, runs Project 2000. This program brings black male adult mentors into all-boy classrooms and is operating in several cities such as Baltimore, Miami, and Chicago. Volunteers visit the classrooms and provide help to the teachers while serving as mentors and role models for the students. Dr. Holland has also initiated all-boy classrooms to provide a learning environment where black boys are encouraged and expected to perform well academically. In addition, all black male academies have been developed and are being implemented in Detroit and Milwaukee. These schools emphasize recruitment of black male teachers, which brings academic mentors and role models to black boys in a school environment.

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS ABOUT MENTORING

ratio of mentors to proteges

On the practical side, we wanted to resolve many questions about designing and operating mentoring programs and to answer specific questions about mentors in their relationship to proteges. Andre Watson, Director of the Male Youth Health Enhancement Project in Washington, D.C., informed workshop participants about the practical side of running a mentoring program (**see Watson highlight**). The issues that received the most attention included the ratio of mentors to proteges, whether mentors should be paid or volunteer staff, and monetary incentives for youth participation.

Since programs have limited funding and difficulty recruiting black male mentors, one-to-one mentoring is not possible for everyone. Most programs have one staff person coordinating activities and the mentors are volunteers. Mr. Watson explained that some youth need the amount of attention that one-on-one mentoring affords, but other youth can benefit from sharing adult attention with a small group of peers. He provided an example of how he would match a smaller number of adults to youth. For a group of 30 boys and 5 mentors, he would match each mentor with 6 boys. Each mentor would work closely with his assigned proteges and keep them involved in the program by staying in contact with the boys' families and schools, and possibly

"Linking Mentoring and Schooling: A Reform Agenda"

by Norris Haynes

The goal of adequately meeting the educational and emotional needs of minority youth cannot be met by schools or mentoring programs alone. Instead, efforts to reach this goal need to be better coordinated between schools and non-school-based mentoring initiatives. Most schools, however, are not currently structured to complement outside mentoring efforts. Nor are mentoring programs currently designed to work *with* schools to support individual youths. Thus, reforms are needed on both sides if youths are to be more effectively served by the educational and emotional support systems created to help them.

What Can Mentoring Programs Do to Maximize Their Effectiveness?

To more successfully effect the positive growth and development of minority youths and African American males in particular, mentoring programs should change in at least two ways. The first involves a change in attitudes toward schools. Many mentoring personnel do not view schools as agents of positive change, and thus do not make efforts to work collaboratively with schools to effect change. The attitude that schools have failed minority youth and cannot be induced to greater levels of effectiveness closes the door of opportunity for a new partnership between mentors and school staff.

The second change involves some rethinking of the one-adult/one-child model. Although the one-on-one mentor/youth relationship is undoubtedly an important one, there may be advantages to having schools and school staff involved. One benefit is that including peers and school personnel can foster the cooperative learning that has come to be recognized as so important to minority youth. Another benefit is that broadening the mentoring process can recapture some of the essence of the extended family, also an important factor in minority student adjustment and achievement.

attend church activities with them. Another option for overcoming the lack of black male mentors would be to use non-black and female mentors. This option is heavily debated and presents concerns that are addressed in a later section.

Watson also spoke about the benefits of involving an adult, a child, and an older youth in a program. Such a triad can be especially effective for proteges who have graduated from mentoring programs serving younger boys.

In a triad, the younger protege would receive guidance and attention from an older youth and an adult. This is one solution to the lack of available adults to serve as mentors. The older youth would benefit in several ways as well. For one, youth that gain successful experiences from a program usually do not want to leave even if they have "graduated" or exceeded the upper age limit. By serving as an intermediate mentor, they can stay with the program, learn leadership skills and develop responsibility through actual experience, almost like an apprenticeship in fatherhood. With a triad team, older program participants can continue to be part of the community, gain the benefits of new roles, and give back to the program.

should staff be paid or unpaid?

A second practical question that was addressed was whether or not mentors or program staff should be paid. A program that aims to provide large amounts of adult attention to its participants may have to pay staff to find enough mentors. For example, a program might expect a mentor to give 3 or more hours a day to a child and to perform involved tasks, such

as working with his teacher. Mentoring is hard work, and time consuming; therefore, commitments of this level may not be possible for mentors with full-time jobs. Paying staff also could provide a more stable environment for youth by limiting turnover.

Despite the possible benefits, some workshop participants were against paying mentors or service providers. They believed that volunteer mentors would better demonstrate to children that they are involved because they care, not because they are being paid. However, Dr. Hahn, of Brandeis University, asserted that kids know when adults care, regardless of the circumstances. Finally, because of budget limitations, paying staff is not an option for many programs.

monetary incentives to achieve program goals

The workshop quickly established a consensus against giving monetary incentives to youth for achieving specific goals, or avoiding negative behavior. Conferees were strongly opposed to monetary rewards because such rewards could prevent youth from developing intrinsic motivations to achieve specific goals. Most participants agreed that if extrinsic motivation is used, then a child

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may discontinue the behavior when the reward is discontinued. In general, though participants did not reject the possibility of providing some form of reward if it was small and unannounced.

Long-term incentives were not as vigorously disputed. A long-term incentive could work in programs with specific educational goals, where the incentive would be a college fund or equivalent. The Eugene Lang model is an example of a successful program using long-term incentives. Replications of this model use existing resources such as scholarships to minimize program costs.

mixed race and gender?

A prominent question about mentoring minority male youth from inner-city neighborhoods is whether the adults that serve in the programs must also be minority and male. This point continues to be contentious and even the workshop participants were unable to resolve it. Some argue it is essential to provide adult black male role models for youth as a context for teaching cultural history and self-esteem. Others argue that cultural sensitivity and training would enable adults of different races and women to serve black boys. One workshop participant proposed that communication skills and cultural awareness could help interracial and intergender adult staff overcome any barriers that their personal characteristics might pose.

communication and bicultural competence

Elaine Blechman, a psychologist at the University of Colorado, gave a presentation about the role of communication in the mentoring process **(see Blechman highlight)**. She discussed the fundamental skills

"Minority Male Mentoring in the 1990s: A Practitioner's Experience"

by Andre Watson

This paper outlines some of the main issues surrounding the operation of mentoring programs for minority youths. The issues, which are central to the design and operation of an effective mentoring program, include: screening, orienting, and rewarding mentors; youth/mentor ratio; time commitment; program costs; the question of race in matching mentors and youth; locating the program in or out of the school; and mentor as family advocate.

Elements of a Successful Program

There are several elements of the Male Youth Project in Washington, D.C. that contribute to the program's success. First, it serves all male youth, not only those in most dire need of help. In this way it reaches youth before they get to the desperate stage. Second, it is organized around teams that foster positive interaction among peer group members, which reinforces program goals. Third, by having multiple staffing plans, the program is able to meet the varying needs of the youths. For example, the program offers one-on-one mentoring for those with severe needs. Fourth, the program not only provides specific activities for youths, but also serves as a place where they can just "hang out" after school. Having both a place to go and mentors to talk to after school is very important to boys who may have no other place to go during these hours. Finally, the program encourages "graduates" of the program to return as mentors themselves. Maintaining their membership in a successful group environment allows these youths to continue to belong to the "family" many still need even after graduation.

One of the fundamental tenets of the program is the importance of providing a working relationship among the four institutions with the most impact on a youth's life: home, school, church, and community. The philosophy underlying this principle is that the inadequacies of any one of these influential factors can adversely affect a youth's development. Mentors are critical in the effort to link these four social institutions. In the Male Youth Project, mentors meet periodically with youth, parents, teachers, and project staff to discuss progress and setbacks. They visit youths in their homes, at school, and at church. The idea is to strengthen the healthy effects of the home, school, church, and community on youth and to compensate for the gaps that may exist in these institutions' provision of support.

required of any mentor to engage and communicate with the youth, his parent(s), and his teachers. Mentors can teach boys the socialization process to be successful in school and work.

As a result of Dr. Blechman's discussion, the participants determined programs should provide young black males with bicultural competence. Rather than expecting a child to maintain only skills of the mainstream world, give him the ability to be successful both in his community and the larger society.

why evaluation could be helpful

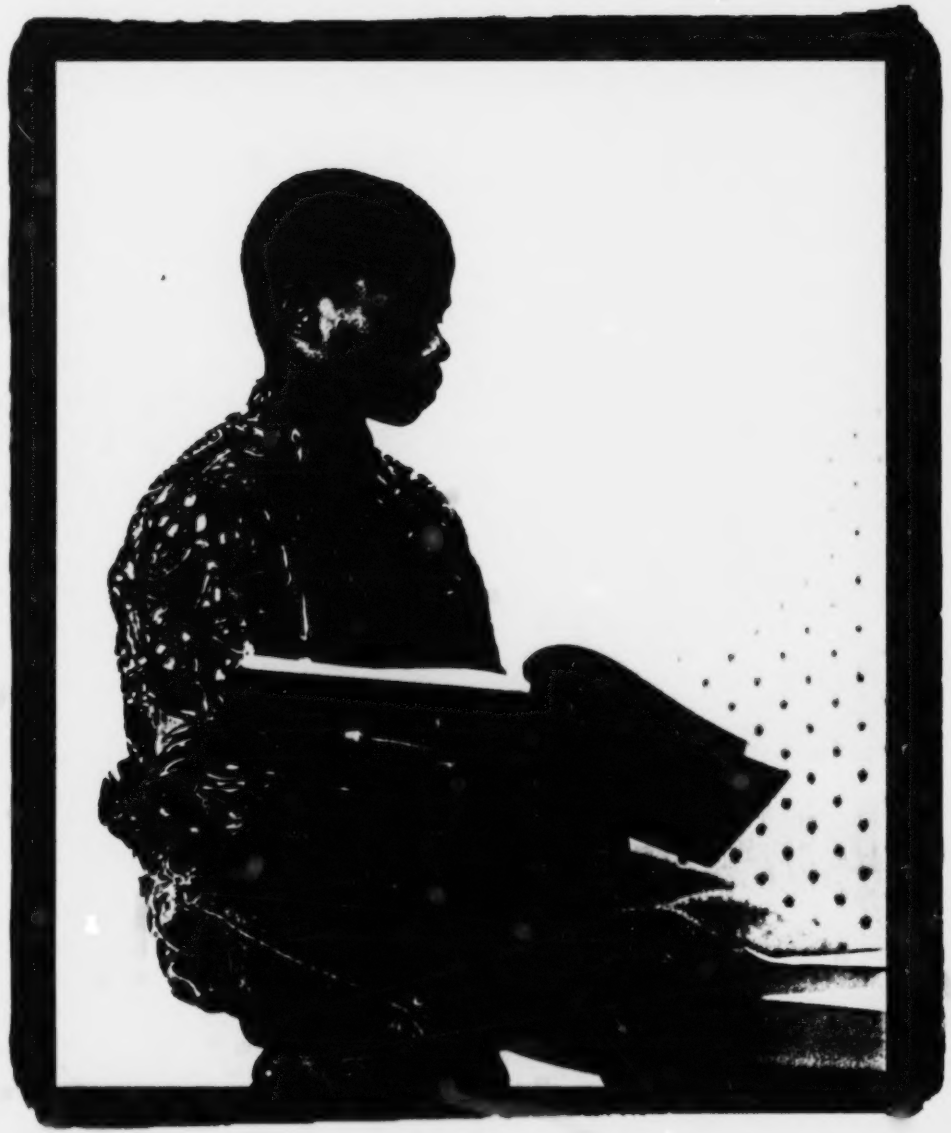
The workshop provided many insights and answers about developing programs to meet the needs of minority youth. One objective of the workshop was to determine how large a role mentoring large play in services to minority adolescents. The consensus of the workshop participants was that mentoring was not essential to a successful model; rather, the key is a caring, nurturing adult. Many program surveyors and program practitioners have supported Ron Ferguson's assertion that black male youth are extremely open to bonding with an adult male; one simply needs to be provided. Another important message of the workshop was that we should broaden our agenda from focusing on mentoring to looking at all types of youth development programs.

However, some points remained unanswered. More definitive information about remaining issues, such as how much time is needed to make a difference, and whether service providers and proteges must be the same race and gender, could be provided by a demonstration project with evaluation. Lee Bawden, Director of Human Resource Policy at The Urban Institute, stressed that to meet the large-scale need, programs need federal government support. He pointed out that this would not be forthcoming without proof of effectiveness, which could be gained through demonstration projects.

SUMMARY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The Institute's workshop was a successful exchange of ideas about how community-based mentoring programs can help prepare young minority boys to become responsible men and parents. From academic research and surveys of programs, we learned about building self-esteem and healthy lives for adolescents. School reformers and anthropologists taught us about integrating mentoring and the education system, and specifically about the experiences of African American boys in the traditional school system. The participants discussed the concept of bicultural competence, which would enable black male youth to simultaneously succeed within the cultural environment of their neighborhoods and also in the larger society. Finally, the workshop addressed many practical issues about running mentoring programs and serving young black men.

The general consensus of program participants was that our target population of 8- to 15-year-old African American boys was a critically underserved population. However, as David Whitaker, from East End Neighborhood House, stated, mentoring is only one spoke in the wheel of services needed to serve this population. In fact, there is a tendency to use the word mentoring to describe a wide range of programs that focus on this target population. Before proceeding with our research, therefore, we developed a definition of mentoring to guide our future work and to differentiate mentoring programs from



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other youth development programs targeting young black males (hereafter, YDBM programs).

The workshop enabled us to refine our thinking on mentoring and how mentoring fits in the overall picture of YDBM programs. Most importantly, we can now perceive more clearly the needs of our target population.

As part of our ongoing research project, then, we will examine many issues central to the needs of young black males and the programs that serve them. We will:

1. describe the crises of young black males from a developmental perspective;
2. describe the void in social policy in relation to adolescent development;
3. describe the field of YDBM programs;
4. describe the field of agencies that sponsor such programs;
5. describe the challenges facing the major types of sponsoring agencies in serving young black males; and
6. suggest how to move the field of fragmented programs toward a structure of interventions.

The results of the project will provide a reliable knowledge base for public education on the need for and status of YDBM programs. Further, it will encourage cooperation among agencies sponsoring such programs, as well as encourage and guide public and private support for YDBM programs. ■

"Mentors for High-Risk Minority Children: Toward Bicultural Competence"

Elaine A. Blechman

Bicultural competence is the capacity to operate with ease in two social contexts while maintaining a sense of pride in one's own origins and distinctive identity. Together with effective communication, bicultural competence should be imbedded in the goals of mentoring programs that seek to empower high-risk minority youth. Cooperation between mentors, parents, and teachers enhances children's ability to achieve bicultural competence.

The social-learning model developed in this paper describes how bicultural competence might be promoted via mentoring. The model assumes that inner-city children who use street-wise communication at home and in the neighborhood and middle-class communication at school (and later at work) can gain access to advantages not available to youth whose competence is limited to the inner-city milieu.

How Mentors Can Promote Bicultural Competence

Following are a few of the recommendations developed from the model:

1. Screen prospective mentors and select those who evidence bicultural competence and effective communication.
2. Make effective communication an essential characteristic of the mentoring organization.
3. For children with school achievement problems, develop a daily reward system to encourage academic achievements, communications skills and appropriate classroom behavior.
4. For children who are aggressive or withdrawn, integrate the mentoring process with peer group programs that teach children basic communication skills as strategies for coping with key life challenges.

The research in this publication will appear in a forthcoming book entitled *Nurturing Young Black Males: Challenges to Agencies, Business, and Government.*

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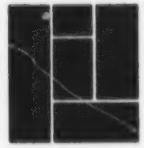

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